

**Testimony of
Mitchell R. Goldblatt**

March 3, 2022

**In Opposition to Senate Bill No. 212
Labor and Public Employees Committee**

SB 212 An Act Concerning Permanent Partial Disability Benefits and Pension Offsets

Committee Chairs Senator Kushner and Representative Porter and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My name is Mitch Goldblatt. I am the Director of Human Resources for the Town of Guilford, a Selectman in the Town of Orange, a member of the Executive Board of the Connecticut Public Employer Labor Relations Association, and serve on the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities Policy Committee on Labor Relations.

Pension Plans in the Public Sector are a dying breed and not because Pensions are bad idea, but simply because they have become unaffordable and unsustainable. Unfortunately, enactment of SB 212, will hasten the demise of Pensions in municipal government by putting even more stress on local finances.

Employees earn their pensions based on a combination of factors including salary, longevity, and a multiplier, most often the result of Collective Bargaining. While municipal pensions can indeed be high for those that earn them, it is hard to explain and justify the instances when someone earns more in retirement than they do as an employee. This bill would make that commonplace. Why is that?

A typical municipal pension plan will pay a employee 50% of their base salary in a lifetime pension when they retire based on a disability. As long as the same individual is injured on the job, the Workers Compensation benefit is typically 75% of their base salary.

Due to the fact that this combination of Pension Distribution plus Workers Compensation will easily exceed 100% of the retiree's salary, negotiated Pension Plans have wisely put in a cap or offset in these situations. Also, at a time, when municipal budgets are stretched, why wouldn't this sensible offset be maintained in what is already a well-established program?

Finally, let's not forget that it is the municipal budget, often voted on in referendum by the residents and taxpayers. The costs for both the pension distribution and workers compensation insurance come from the same pockets. There is no reason for the state to override the home rule and collective bargaining that have led to a system that has been fair and has worked for decades.

Labor relations is about communication between the municipality and their respective labor unions. However, Senate Bill 212 implies that we are incapable of communicating effectively and imposes unnecessary, and unfunded burdens on Connecticut's towns and cities.

I, along with the Connecticut Public Employer Labor Relations Association Executive Committee, as well as the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, strongly urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill 212.